

# News Release

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## **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Seeks Public Comment on Manzana Wind Power Project Draft Environmental Assessment and Conservation Plan**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is seeking public comment on a draft environmental assessment and draft conservation plan for the Manzanita Wind Power Project in Kern County, California. Manzanita Wind LLC owns the project and has applied for an incidental take permit. If approved, the permit would cover the incidental take of up to two free-flying California condors and two associated eggs or chicks over 30 years.

The California condor is North America's largest bird and is listed as an endangered species under the Endangered Species Act. There have been no documented cases of a wind turbine injuring or killing a condor. However, as the species' population in the wild increases, so does the potential for condor presence near wind energy projects.

The draft plan describes measures the company would take to minimize and mitigate their project's potential impact on condor populations. Minimization measures include a system to detect approaching condors and to curtail operation of wind turbines if a condor is at risk of collision. Mitigation measures include working with a captive breeding facility to fund the breeding of additional condors for release into the wild. A monitoring program would also be in place to ensure plan compliance over the life of the permit.

"The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is dedicated to achieving conservation through partnerships and finding common ground," said Scott Sobiech, Field Supervisor for the Carlsbad and Palm Springs Fish and Wildlife offices. "Conservation plans provide a mechanism for wind energy companies to manage impacts to condors and help us recover this federally endangered species."

The Service regularly engages with industry groups to identify innovative strategies for conserving and recovering at-risk species found within a project area, and has a demonstrated history of successful working relationships with wind companies. Since 2013, the Service has been working with wind companies to minimize the risk to California condors at existing wind energy projects in Kern County and to support the recovery of this species.

Copies of the draft environmental assessment and draft conservation plan are available online at [https://www.fws.gov/carlsbad/HCP\\_Docs.html](https://www.fws.gov/carlsbad/HCP_Docs.html).

Comments on the draft documents will be accepted until February 5, 2021. You may submit comments electronically to [fw8cfwocomments@fws.gov](mailto:fw8cfwocomments@fws.gov); or by mail to Assistant Field Supervisor, Palm Springs Fish and Wildlife Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 777 East

Tahquitz Canyon Way, Suite 208, Palm Springs, CA 92262. Please reference the Manzana Wind Power Project in the subject line of your email.

A copy of the notice was published in today's Federal Register at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/current>.

*The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information about our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov/cno](http://www.fws.gov/cno) or connect with us via [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and [Flickr](#).*

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